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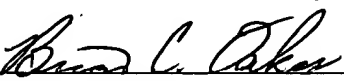
In accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. 1.56, 1.97, and 1.98, the attention of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby directed to the documents listed on the attached Form PTO-1449. It is respectfully requested that the documents be expressly and independently considered during the prosecution of this application, and that the documents be made of record therein and appear among the "References Cited" on any patent to issue therefrom. This Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted prior to the issuance of a first Office Action on the merits, therefore, no fee is due.

It is respectfully requested that the documents cited in this Information Disclosure Statement be independently considered by the Examiner.

Please charge any shortage in the fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 13-2491 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 6/7/2001



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